

Week Ending Friday, May 7, 2004

Proclamation 7776—Older Americans Month, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than 47 million Americans are 60 years old or older. During Older Americans Month, we honor our senior citizens for enriching and strengthening our Nation, and we pledge to continue working to enhance their quality of life.

This year's theme, "Aging Well, Living Well," reflects the many ways that older Americans contribute to our national character. Many are working beyond traditional retirement age, while others volunteer their time serving worthy causes. Through the Senior Corps program of the USA Freedom Corps, more than half a million older Americans donated time to their communities last year, and many others are volunteering through the Peace Corps and other programs.

My Administration is committed to helping our senior citizens lead better, healthier, and longer lives. Late last year, I was proud to sign into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. This historic legislation represents the greatest improvement in senior health care since President Lyndon Johnson signed the Social Security Act Amendments that created Medicare in 1965. It gives seniors access to affordable prescription drug coverage, provides for preventive screenings to diagnose and treat health conditions early, and updates the Medicare system to let seniors choose coverage that best meets their needs. These changes are vital to ensuring that seniors can obtain the health care and prescription drugs they deserve.

Older Americans help others to understand the past, and they teach timeless les-

sons of courage, endurance, and love. Through their legacy of patriotism, service, and responsibility, America's seniors also unite families and communities and serve as role models for younger generations.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2004 as Older Americans Month. I commend older Americans for the contributions they make to our communities. I further commend Federal officials, State, and local governments, tribal organizations, service and health care providers, caregivers, volunteers, and all those who work on behalf of our senior citizens. I encourage all Americans to honor their elders and publicly reaffirm our Nation's commitment to older Americans during this month and throughout the year.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7777—National Charter Schools Week, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America looks to its schools to give all students the skills they need to realize their

dreams and reach their potential. Charter schools help fulfill this mission. During National Charter Schools Week, we celebrate the successes of these institutions.

Charter schools are an important part of our effort to improve the public school system and offer broader educational options to every family. Like other public schools, charter schools are open to all students. Because they are subject to fewer State and district regulations than other public schools, charter schools offer teachers and administrators more freedom in tailoring programs to meet specific student and community needs. In exchange for this freedom, they must meet stricter accountability standards.

Now in their second decade, the demand for charter schools is growing among families from all backgrounds. During this school year, our Nation's charter schools will educate nearly 700,000 students. Many families choose charter schools because of the innovative curriculum and focus on academic achievement, and because these schools can be a promising alternative to a low-performing neighborhood school.

Charter schools are an important part of the No Child Left Behind Act. They provide parents with more choices for their children's education. The greater autonomy of charter schools allows them to employ innovative educational practices. Studies have shown that many charter schools improve academic achievement for their students and that parents of students in charter schools are satisfied with their children's schools.

My fiscal year 2005 budget includes an overall 49 percent increase for elementary and secondary education over 2001 levels, and it proposes \$219 million for charter school grants and \$100 million for charter school facilities. Together, funding for these two charter school programs has increased 68 percent over 2001 levels. By raising expectations, insisting on results, and refusing to accept failure, we are strengthening our public schools and improving education for all children in America.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2 through

May 8, 2004, as National Charter Schools Week. I commend our Nation's charter schools, and I call on parents of charter school students to share their successes to help all Americans understand more about the important work of charter schools.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7778—Law Day, U.S.A., 2004

April 30, 2004

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The theme of this year's Law Day, "To Win Equality by Law: *Brown v. Board* at 50," celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Declaration of Independence declared the equality of each person before God and the responsibility of Government to secure the rights of all. However, it was not until ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868 that the equality of all citizens under law was guaranteed by the Constitution. Still, for decades afterwards, millions of African-American citizens were subjected to shameful discrimination, and in many public school systems, students were segregated by race. Finally, in the 1954 *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that segregating students in our public schools violated our Constitution.

Our Nation is grateful for the brave men and women and boys and girls who challenged segregation and helped make equal justice under law a reality for all Americans.